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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable BENJAMIN L. CARDIN, a Senator from the State of Maryland.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Almighty God, Heavenly Father, open our hearts to Your movement in our midst. As we trust Your providence and cling to Your promises, give us wisdom and spiritual vision to see You at work.

Today, I claim for our lawmakers Your promise through Jeremiah: Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things which you do not know.

Lord, keep our Senators from being intimidated by the challenges they face. Clothe them with the armor of integrity, shield them with Your truth, and guide them with Your power. Help them to please You by living holy and peaceful lives. Give them a hunger for Your words and a desire to apply Your knowledge in their daily walk.

We pray in Your precious Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable BENJAMIN L. CARDIN led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD).

The assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, February 6, 2008.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, section 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable BENJAMIN L. CARDIN, a Senator from the State of Maryland, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

Mr. CARDIN thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, it is a big day today. Our three Presidentials are going to be here, and we have a 5:45 vote. We are looking forward to that. We don't see them as much as we used to.

Following my remarks today and those of the Republican leader, there will be an hour of morning business, equally divided, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each. The majority will control the first half and the Republicans will control the second half.

Following morning business, the Senate will resume consideration of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, as under the previous order. Rollcall votes may occur throughout the day in relation to FISA amendments. As I mentioned, there will be a 5:45 p.m. cloture vote on the Finance Committee amendment to the economic stimulus. Second-degree amendments to the finance amendment are due by 4 p.m. today.

VIOLENT STORMS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, being from the desert and seeing, on occasion,

storms in the northern part of the State, it is hard for me to understand the power of nature we see so often—and that we see more often than we used to with these tornadoes occurring throughout this country.

Last night and this morning, violent storms raged through five States, including Alabama, Arkansas, Kentucky, Mississippi, and Tennessee. They were violent. It appears there will be more than 50 people declared dead, scores of people have been injured, and there was a tremendous loss of personal property. Our thoughts, of course, this morning go out to the victims. We, in all our States, have had occurrences relating to natural disasters. But I think we should all pause and think about the lives of these people who have been snuffed away by this violent set of storms throughout the country and the loss to their loved ones, their neighbors, and their families.

We have heard reports this morning of how our first responders reacted. The police, firefighters, and National Guard medics worked through the night, around the clock, to save lives. The latest event we had in Nevada was so minor compared to this. We had a levy break and flood waters inundated hundreds of homes. We were very concerned about that. But the one thing we did recognize is how the police, firefighters, and other first responders reacted so quickly. What took place last night is so much more significant than what we had in Nevada. It is difficult to comprehend the severity of what happened last night. The work of the first responders, and others, will continue around the clock for some time. Rebuilding will begin and I am confident that, as a congressional body, we will be called upon to help in some form or fashion.

THE ECONOMY

Mr. President, the top priority of this Congress right now is to bring relief to Americans who are struggling through a troubled economy. One need only listen to the morning news, as I did, to

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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